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## The impossible species.

OC OC

There's nothing quite like meeting your first human.

That's something I don't say lightly. Even if you're just meeting a new species, unheard of on the pan-galactic stage, I'd say it would likely feel less significant, or less memorable than meeting a human for the first time.

I'm not the first creature to encounter one of the beings, and for that small mercy I am glad, but even knowing the tales of what I had to expect, the appearance was still jarring.

Humans...well... they don't move right. Hell, they don't look right either, but that's a different thing.

Humans are on the bigger classes of all the sapient and sentient species out there, but they far outclass even the largest creatures in sheer height. They're towering, slender giants, with an almost enchantingly graceful locomotion that seems to defy common sense. They walk exclusively on two legs. Two legs! While they do have feet that cover surface in three dimensions, that means most of their weight is naturally only mechanically stabilized in a single-dimension.

But yet they walk, they stride, they run and they perform such graceful acts on those two legs. Almost comedically, get them to walk in their approximation of normal, quadrupedal locomotion, and they're slow and clumsy like newborns, using knees and elbows. It's almost like a fairytale in its silliness. Many species in fact, do call them Fairies or Fae, I know. Though those are not the only names, nor are these the only reasons.

But I digress.

Alongside their unnatural locomotion, I got to witness firsthand their appearance, when I was introduced to two ambassadors of the human Imperium. That's their name for it. Imperium. A different spelling of Empire.

Real creative.

But again, the ambassadors. Tall, graceful, and built like high performance machines with their black metal exteriors over moderate muscle that I knew was far stronger than its size and appearance ought to indicate. Deceptive, contradicting, or surreal appearances seems to be a trait of their species.

Their heads were dark chrome, and slightly reflective. I had to remind myself that no, they were not nude. While many species lacked the concept for clothing, the humans, of course, appeared denuded, but both were wearing some kind of specialist

bodysuit over their skin. It gave very good highlight of their broad anatomy actually, though I had no doubt that fine details were likely hidden.

The slimmer one, recognizably female, bent at the waist in a demonstration of casual mastery of balance, and greeted me. Her name was Sarah. She and her companion, Davis, were to take me in, tour me through their culture, and answer my questions throughout. All for the cause of advancing social integration.

Go figure.

My first day with them proved immensely educational. The plan initially, had been to take them to lunch on the planet we were dwelling on. I suppose it was in part for me to gauge them, before I committed myself to journey for so long with them. I knew that they were predators, as much as the idea of sapient predators is unpleasant to face. They were omnivorous, capable of consuming practically any living carbon based material for biofuel, and that they actively hunted for food and for sport. The first contact rituals had been extensive, and the species had made no secret of their impressive streak of inventive violence, their capacity, and their history of doing greater and greater acts of carnage and horrors on other species, other humans, and even their planet.

I'd wanted to see their eating habits. I'd entirely forgotten that this species ventilated for reason to acquire oxygen. Yes, you read that right, they breathe oxygen. It's used to process high energy reactions and such in their body, and while the idea did raise a laugh and seemingly reference a line of comedy, humans have no proven medical cases of spontaneous combustion.

The humans had instead placed a starch based dish into a processor, and fed it into their suits. They were used to dwelling in them for extended periods of time. Turns out, they could handle food, atmosphere, fluid intake, waste expulsion, and a host of other inbuilt functions other species would have tied to innumerable devices and bits of technology they'd carry around. They even contained a layer of nanomachines across the skin, to avoid epithelial damage from the effects of wearing them too long.

I'd planned then to move straight to my ship. That did not happen.

We ran into a crowd while leaving the eating hall. All the major interactions had of course, taken place on the core worlds. Civilized, formal and dignified meeting in civilized, formal and dignified places. This, coupled with my job being that of cultural integration and opening, had lead me to start our journey of exploring cultures to Xanullu, a frontier world, distal from more rules-heavy dominions and dwelling in an area of well known vibrant culture. Being more versed, I wanted to take them to places that weren't immediately on the tourist hotspots, so I took them here. Less tourist traps, more genuine culture. Retrospectively, perhaps an incomplete choice.

Frontier world, lack of conventional structured laws, isolated community and two of the towering, eldritch new species with their supernatural motions and feared reputation on the pan-galactic headline.

Put two and two together.

Ironically, the only one who ended up being at risk was me. The locals used a form of charged particle weaponry. Superheated measures of noble gas, blasted at a hundred meters a second. Most creatures would have a charred hole put through them. Neither human were phased.

Davis told me after the fact that their suits were rated for exposure to hard vacuum and star radiation under high-atmospheric and space-born conditions. They were specifically armoured to absorb high thermo-radiative energy doses, and fast moving microparticles alike.

Made for an absolutely classic spectacle of what I'm dubiously calling humanism now. As did Davis proceeding to engage them with his limbs alone. It makes some sense, when you consider that it's an apex predator species with a self-confessed tendency to creative violence, evolved on a high gravity, high biospheric, type 3, class 12 deathworld, trained in how to use its body in combat under multiple schools of training several centuries, some even millennia, in constant development. It doesn't help much though when you witness it. I lack the words to describe it, and I had to administer myself sedatives after the fact.

I don't really have much else to put into this report. Everything pertaining to information according to their cultures, rules and laws, as abstract, random and contradictory as they are, has been compiled in the separate report. We went around several other planets, systems and peoples. They'd don and remove parts to their suits, sometimes appearing to wear armour, sometimes almost seeming to be small mecha in their own right. Sometimes they included attributes to let them fly outside of transportation, in others to swim, or to climb, or to jump from orbit to ground.

I'll never forget the final stage of our journey though. We had travelled back to the humans' dominions. They had described their planet to me. It's verdancy, its beauty, its splendor. It was like some amateur god decided to cram every single planetary feature all onto one small but very dense ball of rock, and then had forced life to team and multiply and fight desperately to survive and find its own space to live.

They'd destroyed it. In their middling years as a species, they'd developed and grown and conquered their world, turning then on themselves. The level of their industry, their production, had choked their skies and their oceans, driving species after species to extinction and damning everything on that rock. Their unwillingness to admit it, had lead to their world becoming a class 2 deathworld. Lightless, toxic, irradiated and caustic to life. Necessity had forced them to don suits, wearing them outside to protect themselves from their ruined atmosphere. The tale was... bloody miserable. That their species had so prophetically caused their own downfall in their success, and what that fall drove them to.

But then they picked up again. They crafted ships to take them to space. Their new suits and way of life had allowed them to produce and accept ships and living quarters with fractions of the cost and material expense. They'd spread to other worlds, the

new generations paying mind to the faults of those in the past. Slowly their new lives, bereft of the same freedoms and comforts, became more familiar, and thus more manageable. So their species did what they do best. Survived, adapted, specialized and fine-tuned until their space-dwelling 'Imperium', now a cohesive and unified collection of factions willing to admit to a single banner, had reached heights greater than the greatest of their forefathers.

We were unable to travel to Earth, as they so creatively call it. While it by now had recovered completely, being a planetary nature and historical reserve, undwelled upon by humans, the extreme gravity and local flora and fauna were too hazardous, even to Sarah and Davis, without their larger protective equipment's. So, like I had done to them, they did to me.

We travelled to a frontier settlement, off the tourist places, but one lacking the common human conventions.

And yes, settlement. Not planet.

I told you they were a space-borne race. And I did not lie.

It was perhaps the single most surreal experience of them all. A city, vast and tall and towering and ornate in a style humans call 'gothic', that again only a human could think up, floating in the void between stars, exposed and open, lit by artificial lighting from nuclear engines on a scale most can't imagine.

Apparently, convention is to strip the resources from unimportant bodies of rock, preferably those distant to systems and too small to contain life, and use them to build new sections of city. When one wishes to make a new city, a portion simply buds off, to go its own way and slowly build upon itself.

Can you imagine it? A city, like one you'd witness on a capital world, floating in space, with humans just going about their day, floating, flying or walking as if nothing was amiss in their surreal realm.

Except somehow I'd been made the surreal one. Instead of growing more cumbersome in the void, Sarah and Davis had stripped everything from their suits, basically bare of function save a backpack to control their flight. They'd grown more nimble, more easy of motion somehow, than the typical I'd grown used to. While I, swaddled in a extravehicular activity suit, was awkward and flailing and cumbersome like a newborn. But I was the oddity. I was the strange irrationality, the aberrance to convention or sanity in this fae realm of theirs. To them, this existence I'd find impossible, was normal, and my unfamiliarity, if not simply my awe at it, was surreal and irrational.

They took me on a tour around the place. They'd taken me here, because it was one of the void cities that lacked an approximation of Earth's gravity, thereby making it far more pleasant for me. They took me around attractions of their own culture in turn, explaining or simply allowing me to witness them. Parks, film, theatre, play, art, life. It was truly as if I stepped into the realm of the faeries, for the sheer impossible, insanities of their reality that they so casually, easily dealt in were numerous.

I bade farewell to them there, and I feel as if I left a little of my soul there in that otherworldly realm in the void between stars. That void where according to all laws of reality, no life should exist, and yet humans happily dwell and flourish.

An exemplar of humanism, I'd call it. An example of the outwardly irrational, surreal, insane or inconceivable being done or simply existing, almost perfectly contradicting the sane convention or common understanding of what is and isn't possible, being done without mind or care. It seems to embody so much of their human species, though they by nature likely do not observe it.

I think, for all their hazards and their risks and their horrors, I would like to return again to a human dominion, to witness in my own time, the sheer extent of this 'humanism' on display so casually.

Though not any time soon. I would much like a breather on witnessing such impossible events and creatures in this reality.